

THE MARIN COUNTYWIDE PLAN



---

PARKS AND  
RECREATION ELEMENT



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## I. INTRODUCTION

The last parks and recreation plan, The Parks and Recreation Plan 1990 Outdoor Recreation Plan for Marin County, adopted in 1965, proposed formation of a regional park system by Marin County. This goal has been accomplished through a variety of means. Since 1965, Federal and State park acquisitions have contributed significant lands for public use (see Table PR-3). These parks serve the region and are also a destination for visitors to the region. In addition, the Marin County Open Space District was established by popular vote for the acquisition and management of open space lands with operations funded through an ongoing property tax. Working in partnership with local agencies and a number of county service areas, the Open Space District has been able to acquire over 10,000 acres of land on ridges and hillsides, as well as some creek and wetland acreage. These lands provide open space and separators between communities in the urban corridor of the county. The partnership uses a variety of acquisition methods, including local and county service area bond issues.

Several cities in Marin County have prepared, or are updating, recreation elements. In addition, State, Federal, other County or subregional agencies, and private organizations have been active in the development of open space, park and recreation facilities in Marin. However, many recreation needs remain unmet and the criteria for prioritizing needs and the responsibilities for meeting them are not always clear. In addition, new needs are emerging as total recreation demand and specific interests continue to expand and evolve. The Countywide Plan, which contains policies regarding open space, coastal preservation, and protection of ridgelines and other valued open space resources, currently offers little guidance to the County and city park and recreation agencies regarding park acquisition and development or provision and operation of County, community and neighborhood recreation facilities and programs.

As a result of Proposition 13 tax cuts, and the ending or reduction of many public funding programs for parks and recreation, a recreation element provides an important guide to effective and creative application of available resources.

In the years ahead, the focus of the County's attention should be broadened to address the parks and recreation needs of the county's local communities and districts, and to assess the County's role in assisting these jurisdictions with the provision of local parks and recreation facilities.

### A. LEGAL AUTHORITY

The State of California does not mandate inclusion of a recreation element within a general plan. However, California planning law states that "the general plan may include any elements or address any...subjects which...relate to the physical development of the county or city" (Government Code Section 65303). The general plan guidelines prepared by the Office of Planning and Research state that "local governments may underscore their interest in public services and facilities by adopting an optional public facilities element."

The preparation of a parks and recreation element meets the requirements of the Quimby and Naylor Acts, two State laws that are important for maintaining Marin's ability to add to its parkland inventory. The Quimby Act, Section 66477 of the Government Code, permits a local jurisdiction to require the dedication of land for neighborhood and community recreation purposes and/or payment of the appropriate in lieu fee as a condition of approval of a tentative map or parcel map. To implement this law, a jurisdiction must include Quimby Act requirements in an ordinance that provides definite standards for determining the amount of land to be dedicated or the fee to be paid. Application of these standards requires United States Census population data and an accurate inventory of park acreage. A recreation element is also a prerequisite for the acquisition of surplus school properties for recreation purposes, in accordance with the Naylor Act, Section 39397.5 of the Education Code.

## B. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The Parks and Recreation Element is related to other elements in the following manner:

*Community Development:* Designates land uses.

*Environmental Quality Element:* Contains general policies on parks and recreation and priorities for acquisition of open space lands.

*Trails Element:* Contains general policies on parks and recreation.

## C. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

The current Parks and Recreation Element is based on the following general plan documents:

Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1, Facilities and School Sites Inventories, and Recommendations of Needs Surveys

The Parks and Recreation Plan 1990 Outdoor Recreation Plan for Marin County (1965)

This element coordinates with the following jurisdictions and plans:

### 1. The Open Space District

The Open Space District adopted standards from the Environmental Quality Element, which it uses to establish priorities for acquiring land, primarily in the City-Centered Corridor. The District states that its role is to provide "the financial means and leadership needed to identify and secure critical open space areas throughout Marin County." Critical open space areas are defined as areas of natural and, essentially undeveloped land such as:

- ridges, hillsides and canyons;
- streams, natural shorelines and marshes;
- scenic buffer areas; and
- agricultural areas.

## 2. Unincorporated Communities

Special districts serve the park and recreation needs of unincorporated communities. In some cases, Marin County provides services to County Service Areas (CSAs), unincorporated areas paying special tax assessments to the County. Elsewhere, parks, recreation facilities and programs are provided and staffed by Community Service Districts (CSDs). These may be multi-purpose, such as the Tamalpais CSD or the Marinwood CSD, or single purpose, such as Strawberry Recreation and Park District.

## 3. Local Parks and Recreation Planning

The plans of several cities contain recreation elements. The goal of Novato's element is to provide "an effective planning tool to maintain or improve the present level of service and to enhance an already successful park and recreation system." This "level of service" approach to park and recreation facility planning enables a city to identify changing patterns of need and use over a specified period of time.

The Public Access and Recreation sections of Local Coastal Plans I and II are primarily designed to serve visitors to the coast. The plans recommend achieving needed access through vertical (perpendicular) easements to beaches and lateral (parallel) bluff-top and shoreline easements for low-intensity recreational activities, such as strolling, sunbathing, birdwatching, picnicking, fishing, and general viewing.

## D. ORGANIZATION OF THE ELEMENT

The Parks and Recreation Element of the Marin Countywide Plan identifies parks and recreation needs countywide, establishes standards for parkland acreage, and provides policies to guide the County in making decisions for the provision of needed park and recreation facilities.

The needs of local residents for parks and recreation facilities are covered in the various community plans for the coastal corridor, rather than in the LCPs.

## II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

### A. EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The description and analysis of existing parks and recreation facilities in Marin is complicated by a number of factors, including: the multiplicity of agencies providing

parks and recreation; the presence of extensive Federal, State, and regional parks and open space; the wide range of size, function and level of development that exists among County and local parks; and the effect of unique jurisdictional and topographic conditions on the level of service provided within each incorporated and unincorporated community.

## 1. Park Classification and Standards

Where possible, the following discussion is arranged according to the classification described below and summarized in Table PR-1. The standards quoted are taken from Planning and Design Criteria (de Chiara and Koppelman, 1982) and are generally based on standards published by the National Parks and Recreation Association. These are thought to be the most appropriate of the standards commonly used.

*County and regional parks:* Serving a population of 30,000 and usually incorporating natural areas, trails, water features, picnic areas, and recreation facilities;

*Community parks:* Ideally serving a population of 10,000 to 30,000 within a 3-mile radius. Usually containing specialized facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts, community centers and sports field complexes;

*Neighborhood parks:* Ideally serving one or more neighborhoods with a population of 2,000 - 5,000 and within a radius of 1/2 mile and with a minimum size range between 5 and 20 acres; and,

*Mini-parks and tot-lots:* Very small parks, play spaces and sitting areas serving neighborhoods and individual developments.

Mini-parks, neighborhood, and community parks may be provided by cities, community service districts or homeowners' associations, while community parks are usually provided by the cities or by the County. A typical standard for total acreage in these parks averages approximately three acres per thousand persons. The park and recreation system is also augmented by school parks, which may provide hard surface courts, sports fields, and recreation/meeting rooms, and by private facilities.

## 2. The Facilities Inventory

The first Marin County Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory was prepared in 1977 by the County Parks and Recreation Planning Departments, with the assistance of volunteers and local Parks and Recreation officials. Existing public parks and recreation facilities and many private facilities were identified by type, size and ownership and were recorded and mapped for six planning areas: Novato, Las Gallinas/San Rafael, Upper Ross Valley, Lower Ross Valley, the Richardson Bay Communities, and West Marin. A summary of the information contained in the inventory by planning area may be found in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

**Table PR-1. Park and Recreation Facility Size and Service Area Standards**

	Service Area Population		Acres/1,000 Persons		Acres/Facility	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
	m					
<b>Parks</b>						
Regional/County	50,000	100,000	20.0	250		
Community	10,000	50,000	2.5	20	100	
Neighborhood	2,000	10,000	2.5	5	20	
Mini-Parks		500	2,500.0			
<b>School Parks</b>						
Elementary	8,000		2.5	20		
Junior High	20,000	30,000		35		
High	local need			50		
<b>Facilities</b>						
Softball Diamonds	3,000					
Baseball Diamonds	6,000					
Basketball Courts	500					
Tennis Courts	2,000					
Recreation Center	25,000					
Cultural Center	None					
Swimming Pool	10,000		450 ft <sup>2</sup>			
Golf Course	25,000					

Source: Urban Planning and Design Standards, De Chiara and Koppelmann, 1982.

The inventory was updated in 1985 and 1990 to reflect changes since 1977. The inventory was also computerized to ease maintenance and reorganized according to the County's three standard geographic divisions: the City-Centered Corridor with its six planning areas, the Inland Rural Corridor, and Coastal Corridor. With these improvements, a thorough and well-organized inventory should have continuing value in the following respects:

- as a source of public information which is easy to update;
- as a planning tool to assist County and local agencies in analyzing the supply of parks and recreation facilities in the County and each planning area relative to

appropriate standards and thus to assist in setting planning, acquisition, and development priorities.

Because open space does not serve the County's needs for many types of active recreation outlets, lands in the open space category are not included in the inventory. These lands will be discussed in the Parks and Recreation Element only as their presence affects the policy choices available to the County and other local park and recreation providers.

a. Major Parks and Open Space Areas

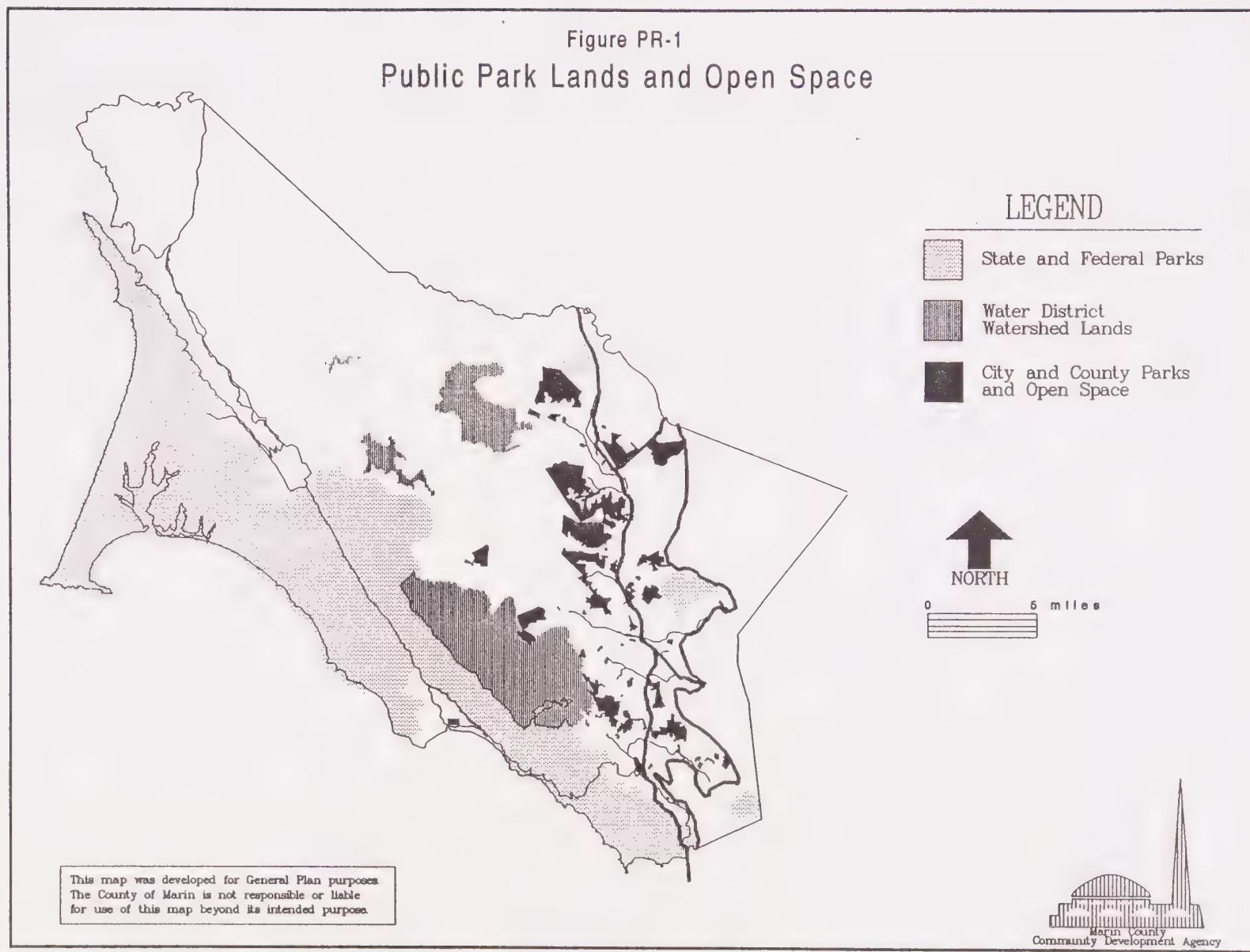
The total acreage in recreation and open space use in Marin more than quadrupled between 1965 and 1990 (see Figure PR-1). This increase is due almost entirely to acquisitions by the Federal and State governments and by the Marin County Open Space District. The District's aim has been to preserve lands which are of unique importance to county residents, but which are outside the boundaries of State and Federally-protected properties.

Together, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Point Reyes National Seashore, State parks, Marin Municipal and North Marin County Water District watershed lands, and Open Space District lands total approximately 150,000 acres. These lands include many of the parks and facilities proposed in the 1965 Parks and Recreation Plan (see Tables PR-2 and PR-3).

The contiguous Federal and State parklands comprised of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA), the Point Reyes National Seashore, Mount Tamalpais State Park, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Tomales Bay State Park, Inverness Ridge State Park, provide the most extensive area of recreational open space in Marin. The GGNRA and the Point Reyes National Seashore were established in 1972 to protect a dwindling legacy of undeveloped land from further urbanization. The boundaries of the GGNRA and the National Seashore have been expanded since 1972.

Within the boundaries of both the GGNRA and the National Seashore are non-Federally owned public and private lands. Included within the boundaries of the GGNRA are Angel Island and Mount Tamalpais State Park, which offer natural open space and hiking, and Samuel P. Taylor State Park which provides developed overnight vehicle camping spaces on a reservation basis. Although these parks are included within the GGNRA, the State of California has not turned these lands over to the Federal government and they are managed by the State Park Department in cooperation with the National Park Service. Tomales Bay State Park provides sheltered beaches for sunning, swimming, and clamming. The Inverness Ridge State Park is as yet undeveloped.

The 20,000 acres of watershed lands owned by the Marin Municipal Water District are open to the public for hiking, horseback riding, bicycling, and fishing in seven lakes. Most of the North Marin County Water District's watershed lands are not open to the public.



**Table PR-2. Comparison of Facilities Recommended for Development and Acquisition in the 1965 Park and Recreation Master Plan with Completed Facilities in 1990**

Recommended Facilities, 1965	Status in 1990
<b>1. Major Regional Parks</b>	
Deer Park	Marin County
Phoenix Lake	Marin Municipal Water District
Nicasio Reservoir	Marin Municipal Water District
Stafford Lake County Park	Marin County
Stafford Lake - Watershed	North Marin Water District
Laguna Chileno	Private ownership, not a park
<b>2. Shoreline Areas* - Boating</b>	
Muir Beach and Overlook	Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Bolinas Lagoon	Marin County
Agate Beach, Expansion	Marin County (no expansion)
Tomasini Point	State ownership
Miller Park	Marin County
Hog Island Boating Park	Marin County (Miller Park)
Toms Point Beach Park	Audubon Canyon Ranch and private ownership
Estero Americano Park	Private ownership, not a park
Paradise Beach Park	Marin County (expanded)
Keil Cove - Bluff Point	Private ownership, not a park
China Camp - Rat Rock Park	State ownership
Manzanita Marina Green	Private ownership, not a park
Corte Madera Marina	Private ownership, not a park
Gallinas Creek Marina	May be included in McInnis Park
Black Point Marina	Private ownership (with County Launch)

**Table PR-2 (continued)**

<b>Recommended Facilities, 1965</b>	<b>Status in 1990</b>
<b>3. Golfing - Driving Ranges</b>	
Rodeo Lagoon	Golden Gate National Recreation Area (undeveloped)
Corte Madera	Golden Gate Bridge District - various plans
Lucas Valley	Developed as residential
Nicasio Valley	Private ownership - rangeland
West Marin (San Geronimo)	Private ownership, not a park
Chileno Valley	Private ownership - rangeland
<b>4. Historic, Geologic and Botanic Areas</b>	
Tiburon Uplands	Marin County (expanded)
Elephant Rocks (Dillon Beach)	Private ownership, not a park
Estero Fossil Site	Point Reyes National Seashore
Olompali Adobe at Burdell Mountain	State and County Open Space District
<b>5. Wildlife and Stream Reserves</b>	
Marin Islands	State, Federal, County, and land trust ownership
Bolinas Lagoon Refuge	Audubon Canyon Ranch & Marin County
Upper and Lower Tomales Bay	State and private ownership
Tidelands	Private ownership, not a park
Papermill Creek	Private ownership, not a park
Nicasio and Halleck Creeks	Private ownership, not a park
Walker, Salmon and Chileno Creek	State and private ownership
San Antonio Creek	Private ownership, not a park

Note: In the Coastal Recreation Corridor, most of the undeveloped land west of Tomales Bay is owned by the Point Reyes National Seashore, and land east of Tomales Bay is owned by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The Point Reyes National Seashore manages most of the Golden Gate Recreation Area land.

**Table PR-3. Comparison Between Recreation Facilities Under County Ownership in 1965 and Status in 1990**

Park Facilities in 1965	Acres	Status in 1990	Acres
Agate Beach	6.6	Managed by County (State-owned)	6.6
Black Point Boat Launch	.8	Managed by County (State-owned)	2.0
Bolinas Park	.7	Marin County	1.0
Civic Center*	140.0	Marin County	75.0
Drake's Bay	54.3	Point Reyes National Seashore	
McClure's Beach	3.5	Point Reyes National Seashore	
Miller Park	5.7	Managed by County (State-owned)	6.0
Muir Beach Overlook	8.9	Golden Gate National Recreation Area	
Paradise Beach	19.1	Marin County	19.0
Tiburon Uplands	18.6	Marin County	24.0
<b>Total Acreage, 1965</b>	<b>258.2</b>	<b>Total Acreage, 1990</b>	<b>133.6</b>

\*The Civic Center was not fully developed in 1965

Source: Parks and Recreation Plan Facilities Inventory (1965)

In general, the acreage in this category offers natural open space of extraordinary quality for passive and non-intensive active recreation. A majority of the recommended recreation sites have remained undeveloped due to the policy emphasis on preservation of open space in its natural and largely undisturbed state that emerged in the late 1960s. The developed facilities include hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, beaches, and overnight walk-in camping spaces, visitor centers, and educational displays. The latter serve a wide State, national, and even international market and are heavily booked.

The Local Coastal Plans recommend limited "visitor-serving facilities" (overnight accommodations, food services, and tourist shopping areas). However, developed recreation and commercial recreation facilities are limited by the special conditions of the coast. Structures, camping, private recreational vehicles, and horses are to be prohibited in easement areas. Commercial recreation facilities, including riding stables, charter boats, and amusement or marine parks, require large land or water areas. These facilities are

especially limited in Unit I, and where they exist, may be capable of supporting agriculture and therefore not suitable for conversion.

b. County-Owned Parks

While Federal, State, and regional parks and open space in Marin far exceed any available standard, the County-owned parks total only 897.6 acres (see Table PR-4 and Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1). Based on the estimated county population in the 1990 census, this is well below the standard of 20 acres per thousand residents shown in Table PR-1.

The parks and facilities owned and operated by the County and listed in Table PR-4 vary widely in type and size. They include: specialized facilities (boat launches and the Civic Center facilities); a community park (Deer Park); a neighborhood park (Bolinas); beaches (Agate Beach, as well as beaches at McNear's and Paradise Parks); and the nature preserve at the Tiburon Uplands. Although McNear's Beach and Paradise County Parks serve a countywide function and are thus classified as regional in the Facilities Inventory, only Stafford Lake and McInnis Parks meet the size and service area criteria for a true regional park. The total of 589 acres in these two parks represent a small portion of the 4,430 acres needed to meet the countywide regional parks standard. County regional park acreage meets the standard only in central Marin, in the Las Gallinas planning area where McInnis Park is located. While the standard may be unrealistic in light of Marin's extensive open space, it helps underscore a demonstrated need for additional countywide parks for active recreation.

Significant changes in recreational interests have occurred since 1965, including most notably the growth of interest in hiking, running, horseback riding, and biking. Because of the variety of facilities needed, no clear emphasis has emerged to suggest future park and recreation activity in the county. In terms of specialized types of recreation facilities, the County emphasized boating in the 1965 Plan. Golf courses were also emphasized but, with the exception of the Mill Valley course, the former nine-hole Gallinas course, and the planned course at McInnis Park, these facilities have been developed privately.

The Trails Element responds to the increased demand for trails for recreation purposes and especially for connections between the wide range of recreation areas in the county.

**Table PR-4. County-Operated Park and Recreation Facilities, 1990**

<b>Planning Area</b>	<b>Facility Name</b>	<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>
1. Novato	Black Point	Boat Launch	2.0
	Stafford Lake	County Park	139.0
2. Las Gallinas	Civic Center	County Facility	75.0
	McInnis Park	County Park	450.0
3. San Rafael	Adrian-Rosal	County Park*	< 1.0
	McPhail's Playfield	County Park*	< 1.0
	Pueblo Park	County Park*	< 1.0
	Candy's Park	County Park*	< 1.0
	McNear's Beach	County Park	55.0
4. Upper Ross	Deer Park	Community Park	53.0
5. Richardson Bay	Paradise Beach	County Park	19.0
	Tiburon Uplands	Nature Preserve	24.0
8. West Marin	Agate Beach	Beach & Marine Study Area	7.0
	Bolinas Park	Neighborhood Park	1.0
	Miller Park	Boat Launch	6.0
	Whitehouse Pool	Fishing Access	22.0
	Upton Beach	County Beach Park	4.0
	Chicken Ranch Beach	County Beach Park	3.0
<b>County Total</b>			<b>863.0</b>

\*Adrian-Rosal, McPhail's Playfield, Pueblo Park, and Candy's Park are County-owned and operated by CSA 18. Each park is less than an acre. The acreage of the four parks was rounded to three acres for the County Total.

Source: Marin County Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory (1990)

**c. Local parks**

The 1990 inventory of local, community, neighborhood, and mini-parks is summarized by planning area and ownership in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1. Several planning areas appear to be deficient in neighborhood park space, according to the typical neighborhood and community park distinctions and standards given in Table PR-1. These standards are suitable for planning purposes and are based on minimum size, acres per

thousand persons, service area radius, facilities, and functions served. However, Marin exhibits several features that make application of standard park planning measures somewhat misleading. Due to the small size and geographic isolation of many neighborhoods and communities, mini-parks may serve as neighborhood parks while parks of less than five acres may offer facilities typical of community parks. For this reason, the classification of local parks in the technical report is therefore based upon the judgment of recreation directors of city and district parks.

For purposes of Quimby Act analysis, aggregate acreage in mini-, neighborhood and community parks (excluding school acres) is listed in Table PR-5 and compared with the requisite acreage in each planning area at both the three acres per 1,000 and five acres per 1,000 standards found in Government Code Section 66477(b). Section 66477(b) states that those standards are to be based upon the residential density but normally shall not exceed the proportionate amount necessary to provide three acres per 1,000 persons residing in a subdivision. However, if the amount of existing park acreage per 1,000 persons exceeds that limit, as it does in some parts of Marin County, a higher standard, not to exceed five acres per 1,000 persons in the subdivision, may be adopted.

Table PR-5 shows that both Las Gallinas and Lower Ross Valley are deficient in aggregate mini-, neighborhood, and community park space, when the normal Quimby Act standard of three acres per thousand residents is applied. The county aggregate falls more than 350 acres below the upper Quimby standard of five acres per thousand. The latter standard approximates the de Chiara and Koppelmann standard for neighborhood and community parks of 2.5 acres of each type per thousand residents.

In addition, it should be noted that local deficiencies throughout the planning areas may be greater than the aggregate figures suggest. This is because distribution of parks is often uneven due to the small size and relative isolation of individual communities, the topographic isolation of some neighborhoods, or the nature of city and service district boundaries. A further concern is that projected growth, especially in the Las Gallinas and Novato planning areas, which are already the most severely deficient in local park acreage, will require substantial additional neighborhood and/or community park space to achieve and maintain the standard provision.

**Table PR-5. Park Acreage by Planning Area (excluding Schools)  
Compared with Quimby Act Standards**

Planning Area	Local Park Acreage	Required at 3 per 1000	Surplus or Deficit	Required at 5 per 1000	Surplus or Deficit
Novato	216.40	163.55	52.85	272.58	(56.18)
Las Gallinas*	61.00	76.69	(15.69)	127.82	(66.82)
San Rafael Basin	126.90	104.47	22.43	174.12	(47.22)
Upper Ross Valley	82.80	72.59	10.21	120.98	(38.18)
Lower Ross Valley	70.80	88.94	(18.14)	148.23	(77.43)
Richardson Bay	132.00	130.84	1.16	218.06	(86.06)
West Marin	26.00	53.22	(27.22)	88.71	(62.71)
<b>Total Marin County</b>	<b>715.90</b>	<b>690.30</b>	<b>25.60</b>	<b>1,150.50</b>	<b>(434.60)</b>

\* Excluding McInnis Park, which is defined as a countywide regional park.

Source: Marin County Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory, updated April 1990; U.S. Census, 1990.

The following list identifies those areas and neighborhoods in the City-Centered Corridor that city and district directors have identified as currently underprovided with local parks.

**Planning Area: 1 Novato Area**

Novato: All neighborhoods underprovided.

**Planning Area 2: Las Gallinas Valley**

Gallinas Village CSD: Santa Venetia underprovided.

**Planning Area 3: San Rafael Basin**

San Rafael: East San Rafael - Canal Area, Meadows Area, Bret Harte Area underprovided.

**Planning Area 4: Upper Ross Valley**

San Anselmo: Sequoia Area, end of Miracle Mile near San Rafael; and Hawthorne Hills, near Fairfax are underprovided.

Fairfax: No neighborhoods underprovided.

Ross: No neighborhoods underprovided.

**Planning Area 5: Lower Ross Valley** (Kentfield/Greenbrae served by the County)

Larkspur: No neighborhoods within city limits underprovided.

Corte Madera: Entire area east of Highway 101 underprovided.

**Planning Area 6: Richardson Bay Communities**

Mill Valley: No neighborhoods underprovided.

Tamalpais Valley CSD: Almonte underprovided. (Park and trails proposed for Martin's Triangle).

Strawberry: Seminary Drive - Strawberry Point underprovided.

Sausalito: No neighborhoods underprovided.

Marin City: Community underprovided.

Tiburon: No neighborhoods underprovided.

Belvedere: No neighborhoods underprovided.

d. The availability and effect of school parks

The formal or informal use of school fields and/or classrooms provides an essential supplement to publicly-owned and private recreation opportunities. Cooperative arrangements with schools are in place in several cities and districts. These include:

**Planning Area 1: Novato Area**

Novato: Cooperative arrangements in place with all schools.

**Planning Area 2: Las Gallinas Valley**

City of San Rafael: - - -

**Planning Area 3: San Rafael Basin**

Gallinas Village CSD: - - -

#### Planning Area 4: Upper Ross Valley

San Anselmo: Wade Thomas - All fields and some classrooms shared.  
Brookside - All fields and some classrooms shared.  
Drake H.S - All fields and some classrooms shared.

Fairfax: White Hill - Soccer fields, baseball and baseball practice facilities.  
Manor - Soccer fields, baseball and baseball practice facilities  
Hidden Valley - Soccer fields, baseball and baseball practice facilities.

Ross: - - -

#### Planning Area 5: Lower Ross Valley

Larkspur: - - -

Corte Madera: Neil Cummins School - Town Park.

#### Planning Area 6: Richardson Bay Communities

Mill Valley: - - -

Tamalpais Valley CSD: Tamalpais Valley E.S. - Multi-purpose playfield par course, baseball, soccer; after-school program; marsh catwalk and nature study program; all funded by TVCSD.

Sausalito: - - -

Belvedere - - -

Tiburon: - - -

Table PR-6 summarizes the inventory of all local recreation acreage, including school property available for recreation use. The table shows that all planning areas exceed the three acre per thousand standard when school parks are included in aggregate figures. However, if schools become surplus to local school district needs, the total inventory of local park acreage may be reduced unless local action is taken.

**Table PR-6. Summary of Local Park and School Acreage and Comparison with Quimby Act Standards, by Planning Area**

Planning Area	Park Acreage, Including Schools	Required at 3 acres per 1,000 persons	Surplus or (Deficit)	Required at 5 acres per 1,000 persons	Surplus or (Deficit)
Novato	418.80	163.55	255.25	272.58	146.22
Las Gallinas	215.10	76.69	138.41	127.82	87.28
San Rafael Basin	223.10	104.47	118.63	174.12	48.98
Upper Ross Valley	141.60	72.59	69.01	120.98	20.62
Lower Ross Valley	172.80	94.35	78.45	157.26	15.54
Richardson Bay Communities	280.60	143.27	137.33	238.76	41.84
West Marin	112.10	35.38	76.72	58.97	53.13
<b>Total in County</b>	<b>1,564.10</b>	<b>690.30</b>	<b>873.80</b>	<b>1,150.49</b>	<b>413.61</b>

Source: Marin County Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory; updated April 1990; U.S. Census, 1990.

e. Recreation Facilities

In those categories for which standards have been established, recreation facilities generally meet or exceed standard provisions. Table PR-7 summarizes provisions in each planning area for the principal facilities identified in the Facilities Inventory.

**Table PR-7. Summary of Selected Recreational Facilities  
by Planning Area, 1990**

Planning Area	Picnic Sites	Baseball Diamonds	Basket- ball Courts	Sport Fields	Tennis Courts	Swim Pools	Indoor Facilities		
	60'	90'					Gyms	Multi- Use Centers	
1 Novato	10	25	11	75	17	25	3	10	11
2 Las Gallinas	8	19	4	51	20	18	8	3	14
3 San Rafael	10	16	1	42	12	18	2	3	9
4 Upper Ross Valley	11	11	5	24	9	11	2	3	7
5 Lower Ross Valley	9	12	5	35	10	20	4	3	6
6 Richardson Bay	20	15	3	55	13	25	3	7	14
7 Inland Corridor	0	2	0	5	2	0	0	0	1
8 Coastal Corridor	3	5	2	10	6	5	0	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>62</b>

Source: Marin County Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory, updated April 1990.

In Table PR-8, the provision of these facilities is compared with the needs of the 1990 population according to the standards presented in Table PR-1.

**Table PR-8. Recreation Facility Needs, 1990  
Shown as a Surplus or (Deficit)**

Corridor	Baseball Diamonds		Basketball	Tennis	Swim
	60'	90'	Courts	Courts	Pools
<b>City-Centered Corridor:</b>					
Novato	7	2	(34)	(2)	(2)
Las Gallinas Valley	10	0	0	5	5
San Rafael Basin	4	(4)	(27)	0	(1)
Upper Ross	3	1	(24)	(1)	0
Lower Ross	1	0	(28)	4	1
Richardson Bay	0	(5)	(41)	1	(2)
West Marin	3	0	(9)	(1)	(1)
<b>Surplus or (Deficit)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>(6)</b>	<b>(163)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

**NOTE:**

- ( ) indicates a deficit
- Recreational facility needs not listed in Table PR-8 can be found in the 1989 Survey of Parks and Recreation Directors in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

Source: 1990 Park and Recreation Facilities Inventory; 1990 U.S. Census; UPD Facility Standards.

Tables PR-7 and PR-8 indicate that:

Provision of 90-foot baseball facilities is substandard in all planning areas except the Coastal Corridor;

Provision of public tennis courts is substantially substandard in the Richardson Bay Communities and in the Inland and Coastal Corridors;

There is a shortage of certain other countywide facilities, namely, public golf courses, fully developed and lighted multiple sports facilities, swimming and diving pools, gymnasiums and community centers.

A comparison between the actual County supply and currently-accepted standards indicates that the supply of most of the listed facilities meets or

exceeds typical minimum standards, with the exception of basketball and regulation baseball facilities. In terms of picnic areas and sites, the Lower Ross Valley and West Marin are not as well-served as each of the other planning areas.

f. Private recreation facilities.

Private recreation facilities significantly augment those provided by public agencies, but because they are both numerous, subject to change, and often expensive, these facilities are not included in the facilities inventory. Private facilities not included in the facilities inventory include: swim clubs, tennis, racquetball and softball courts, golf courses, and a growing range of other types of recreation facilities.

g. Summary of park and recreation deficiencies by community (1989)

Based on interviews with local parks and recreation directors, the following specific park and recreation facilities have been identified as inadequate:

**Planning Area 1: Novato Area**

Novato: Mini-parks no longer desirable due to limited use potential and high maintenance and liability costs; all active recreation areas, Community Centers, and school sites with athletic facilities are overused.

**Planning Area 2: Las Gallinas Valley**

Gallinas Village CSD: - - -

**Planning Area 3: San Rafael Basin**

San Rafael: Pickleweed Park - lacks sufficient parking  
San Rafael H.S. - lacks maintenance staff  
Davidson School - fields are overused  
Albert Park - field overused  
Shoreline Park undergoing development

**Planning Area 4: Upper Ross Valley**

San Anselmo: Memorial Park - overused

Fairfax: Reopening of Town & Country Club for public use desirable

Ross: Senior Center may be desirable

## **Planning Area 5: Lower Ross Valley**

Larkspur: Remillard Park - walking trails and picnic tables needed  
Piper Park - softball fields overused  
Need for community centers

Corte Madera: Neil Cummins School - Town Park facilities not fully developed  
Small craft area not yet fully developed  
Skunk Hollow - deteriorated equipment needs replacement

## Planning Area 6: Richardson Bay Communities

Mill Valley: Community Recreation Center planned for 1992

Boyle Park and Middle School gymnasium overused due to lack of other facilities

Tamalpais Valley CSD: Recreation House - requires expansion

Strawberry: Recreation building improvement needed  
Brickyard Park development needed  
County assistance with bikeway support facilities needed  
(countywide use at Belloc's Lagoon)

## Sausalito: - - -

Marin City: Comprehensive rehabilitation and security system for recreation center needed; transportation and staff for programs needed; additional park space needed.

Tiburon-Belvedere Community center with stage needed; launch area needed in Belvedere for windsurfers; skateboard area needed

## B. PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS

Two formal recreation needs surveys have been performed since preparation of the 1965 Master Plan. The first, conducted in 1972, was directed principally at the needs of youth in Marin. The 1977 Needs Survey was a relatively comprehensive effort, although both the 1977 and 1972 surveys suffered limitations of sample size and range of questions. For this reason and due to the significant changes in recreation patterns since 1977, the needs survey does not accurately reflect current needs and preferences. A discussion of the sample and summary of the results can be found in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

The policies and recommendations of the element are based on a critical examination of the results of the 1977 survey discussed below, since no more current information is available. The findings are supplemented by the 1980 California Recreation Survey and are examined in the context of current population estimates, local park and recreation elements, observable trends in development location and patterns in Marin, and the observations of city and County Parks and Recreation staff.

## 1. The 1977 County Parks and Recreation Needs Survey

The survey was designed and conducted in November 1977, by the County Parks and Recreation Department and Del Davis Associates. The implications of the survey findings for future parks and recreation planning are further explored in light of the facilities inventory in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

The survey instrument concentrated on active recreation and structural improvements. The only attitudinal question included in the survey instrument concerned willingness to pay additional property taxes of \$10 to \$25 for park and recreational improvements. This produced a 68.5% positive response countywide. No other questions were included to assess attitudes to the availability, quality, and accessibility of parks and other facilities. However, some clear priorities and other more specialized needs, countywide and by planning area, emerge from analysis of the survey.

The needs cited most frequently in the 1977 survey included:

Additional and improved bicycle trails;

More tennis courts and swimming pools;

Specialized recreation facilities including swimming, hiking and camping facilities for handicapped, and recreation centers for teens and elderly;

More intra-community, community-facility, and inter-facility hiking and riding trail links;

More picnic, day, and overnight camping facilities;

Community recreation buildings;

Additional organized sports facilities, especially for soccer;

More small boat access and launching areas; and

Racquetball and handball courts, and gymnasiums.

The most significant finding is the large number of respondents who indicated a need for more of what may be termed "basic" recreation facilities, like bike and hiking trails, campout and picnic areas, and swimming pools.

Bike and hiking trail improvements and additions were identified as the most needed improvements by approximately two-thirds of respondents in all planning areas. The Transportation and Trails Elements of the Countywide Plan address these needs.

Camping and picnic areas, traditionally provided in County parks, were also frequently and consistently identified for needed improvements. The survey also demonstrated that, despite the abundance of open space, some of Marin County's communities have not been keeping up with the demand for more facility-intensive recreation activities. More specifically, responses from communities in West Marin and in the Inland Rural Corridor reflect both special interests, such as equestrian trails, and the need for facilities that are more routinely provided for in urban communities, such as softball and baseball fields. Finally, the survey suggests new needs emerging as the county's population matures. For example, over 50% of Novato and Upper Ross Valley respondents expressed the need for recreation buildings serving senior citizens.

Positive responses from 25% respondents countywide may be regarded as the breakpoint, above which needs can be regarded as significant. If so, relatively little interest was shown in highly capital-intensive facilities and improvements. (Such suggestions mainly included stadiums, tracks and sports fields with lighting and extra seating.) However, several of the items most frequently mentioned, such as large parks for camping, imply the need for facilities that are usually beyond the ability of individual cities and unincorporated communities to provide.

The survey was generally inconclusive in regard to the varying needs between the three corridors. The Inland Rural and Coastal Recreation Corridor respondents appeared to share the same interests as urban corridor respondents. Exceptions included greater emphasis on organized team sport facilities and lesser emphasis on picnic areas and racquetball and handball facilities. A surprisingly high percentage in both rural corridors also expressed the need for more swimming and camping opportunities. However, the small number of respondents in these two corridors suggests that the results may not have been representative.

The survey results were more conclusive when analyzed by planning area than by corridor. Novato indicated needs not met in all planning areas. The San Rafael Basin respondents placed an emphasis on facilities for young people, and the Upper Ross Valley respondents placed an emphasis on facilities appropriate for an aging population. Demographic trends since 1977 correlate with the needs shown in this study.

In general, the 1977 Marin County Needs Survey findings regarding recreational preferences corresponded with the results of the 1980 California Recreation Study conducted by the State Department of Parks and Recreation and presented in the 1982

report, Recreational Needs in California. This survey found demand for additional recreation opportunities to be directed toward outdoor, nature-oriented activities such as fishing and hiking. An increased rate of growth was also projected for visiting historical and cultural exhibits and interpretive centers. The three most popular activities, jogging, bicycling and field sports, were projected to experience the greatest absolute growth because of the importance they had already achieved. However, it was anticipated that the rates of growth in these activities might be somewhat slower than the rate of population growth due to the increasing average age of the population.

## 2. 1989 Survey of Parks and Recreation Directors

During preparation of the draft element, the Recreation Directors of all the county's incorporated communities were interviewed. The intent of these interviews was to determine their park and recreation needs and, also, their views on the most appropriate role for the County.

Each director was asked to provide observations of the community's views in this regard. Only Novato had compiled a recent inventory at the time of the interviews (see Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1 for a city-by-city summary).

Near unanimity was shown regarding the desirability of local operation of city parks and recreation programs. However, virtually every city and district stressed the need for continuing and expanding the County's leadership role in coordinating park and recreation activities countywide by providing a centralized information service, and developing more major regional parks for active recreation and open space management.

The Mill Valley and Novato Recreation Directors emphasized a need for joint acquisition, development, and operation of parks and recreation in peripheral areas such as Strawberry, the Homestead area, Tam Valley, and the environs of Novato and San Rafael. Assistance was also requested with facilities for non-resident visitors to Sausalito.

A listing of the priority needs identified by each city and district is provided below. The variety of needs underscores the appropriateness of local program management. However, if further joint development is determined to be a suitable and feasible role for the County, this role offers an opportunity to help meet special local, and countywide needs.

## 3. Special Needs and Groups in Each Planning Area Not Being Served by Either the Public or the Private Sector, by Planning Area

### **Planning Area 1: Novato Area**

Novato: Community recreation center for all age groups; More athletic facilities needed for children, preteens and adolescents; Senior center needed to coordinate all senior services; Lighted fields for adult baseball leagues.

## **Planning Area 2: Las Gallinas Valley**

Gallinas Village CSD: Indoor space needed and programs needed for children through adult singles and seniors; Multi-purpose parks needed for adolescents and handicapped; Play equipment needed for persons with disabilities.

## **Planning Area 3: San Rafael Basin**

San Rafael: Playfields needed for preteens, adolescents, families and single adults; child care needed; general programs needed for preteens; community gardens needed for adult singles and families; play equipment needed for persons with disabilities.

## **Planning Area 4: Upper Ross Valley**

San Anselmo: Additional indoor recreation space plus fully staffed program needed for children, preteens, and adolescents; gymnasium needed; multi-purpose parks needed for adult singles; parks, indoor space, equipment and programs needed for persons with disabilities.

Fairfax: No response to survey

Ross: No response to survey

## **Planning Area 5: Lower Ross Valley**

Larkspur: Multi-purpose center needed for all age groups

Corte Madera: Facilities needed for all age groups, east of Highway 101

## **Planning Area 6: Richardson Bay Communities**

Mill Valley: Room and programs needed for adolescents; room needed for seniors' activities.

Tamalpais Valley CSD: Indoor space, equipment, and programs needed for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Marin City: Recreation programs for adults and seniors needed

Sausalito: No response to survey

Strawberry: No response to survey

Tiburon: No response to survey

Belvedere: No response to survey

### **III. PARK AND RECREATION ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES**

Examination of Marin's park and recreation needs in the context of the inventory and agency policies raises a number of policy, fiscal, and implementation issues. Despite the extensive open space in the county, significant needs for developed park and recreation opportunities exist. The central issues concerning the County's role in helping to meet these needs are: 1) determining the financial feasibility of expanded park and recreation provisions; and 2) selecting the appropriate types of parks, facilities and programs.

In helping to meet park and recreation needs, the County may choose one or more of the roles described in the following pages:

Acting as a coordinator of the activities and policies of regional and local park and recreation agencies;

Providing a central information source to local agencies and residents;

Providing continued and expanded countywide parks and facilities for active recreation.

#### **A. COORDINATION AND INFORMATION**

In light of the overall abundance of open space, parks, and recreation facilities in terms of acreage and number of providers, the County could provide a valuable coordinating function. Preparation of the Parks and Recreation Element is the first step towards providing such policy coordination. Continued monitoring and updating should be provided to ensure that open space, parks and recreation agencies at all levels augment the system, and to ensure coverage of areas where deficiencies exist.

##### **1. Parks and Recreation Policy Coordination**

Policy coordination with the County will assist cities in determining:

How to interpret Quimby Act standards, using the higher five acres per thousand standard in sub-areas where unserved or underserved pockets exist;

When to require in-lieu fees rather than dedication;

How to obtain trail easements for implementation of the County Trails Element through the development process;

When supplementary assistance from the County may be appropriate to support acquisition and development of parks at county trailheads and intersections; and

Where it may be appropriate to donate to the Federal government trails or natural areas bordering on or providing access to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for cities and recreation districts to donate trails and natural areas to the Open Space District or to enter into cooperative agreements for joint acquisition and management. Such arrangements would relieve local agencies of the financial burden of maintenance for natural parks and open spaces that serve both a countywide and local function. These agencies would achieve a greater ability to serve local needs for more active, developed recreation.

a. Centralized Database Preparation and Maintenance

Completion and maintenance of an adequate database is the key to providing coordination and centralized information. Ideally, all park and recreational needs and resources in Marin should be identified in a manner that permits periodic review and application of criteria for establishing priority needs.

b. Improvement and Maintenance of the Facilities Inventory

Thorough updating, augmenting, and automating the Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory during preparation of the element, the County has made significant progress towards establishing a maintainable database. Some further refinements are desirable in the future and are recommended in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

The inventory will be of primary assistance to local agencies in planning for parks and recreation. In addition, the County could also provide information on parks, facilities and programs to the public. Offering such a public information service on an ongoing basis would be a costly undertaking. An annual publication, summarizing the inventory and providing local contacts for detailed information, might be more appropriate.

c. Recommendations for Updating the Parks and Recreation Needs Analysis

Preparation and conduct of a new comprehensive needs survey is a key recommendation of this element. A methodology is needed to supplement the consistent long-term staff knowledge and observation on which the County was able to rely in the past and which is increasingly hard to guarantee. Ideally, an entirely new and systematic survey should be designed and regularly repeated to achieve and maintain an accurate and useful picture of

needs. A recommended format is provided in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

The requirements of the Quimby and Naylor Acts provide two important reasons why the County should undertake this monitoring and coordinating function. The Acts are discussed in greater detail in the Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1.

## 2. Development of Naylor Act and Quimby Act Criteria

### a. Quimby Act

Close coordination between the County and cities is essential for ensuring consistency in parkland dedication requirements and in-lieu fees.

Many cities, such as San Rafael, have collected park and recreation data and developed park and recreation plans for the city that include surrounding unincorporated areas as well as the area within the city boundaries. They can thus ensure that provision of parks, whether through dedication or use of in-lieu fees, in developments slated for annexation to the city will both meet city standards and be appropriately located so as to achieve even distribution. The effectiveness of such planning could be enhanced with overall monitoring by the County. .

### b. Naylor Act

Under the terms and conditions of the Naylor Act, an opportunity exists to preserve most surplus school sites, if a determination is made that the school facilities provide a valuable neighborhood or district-wide recreational need. This determination would be made by the local community and park and recreation agency, on a case-by-case basis. The Parks and Recreation Technical Report #1 contains a listing of all school sites in the county that could potentially be subject to the Naylor Act.

## B. PARK AND RECREATION PROVISION BY THE COUNTY

In addition to providing information and policy coordination, the County may expand its role as a provider of parks and recreation. The earlier discussion of park and recreation needs has indicated a demand for more parks with facilities for active recreation. The County has the option to satisfy these needs directly, or through funding assistance and recommendations for policy changes, to see that they are met by other agencies.

Priority facility needs include: a golf course at McInnis Park to replace the former Gallinas course; a 50-meter swimming and diving pool if the pool at Indian Valley Colleges is no longer available in the future; and, provision for overnight group camping and day camps.

Numerous other options for active recreation activities not currently provided in the county should be examined individually in terms of need and interest, location, and feasibility. Proposals for certain types of developed recreation are expected to be controversial. However, increased active recreation opportunities, ranging from managed facilities for mountain bike riding to archery, are desirable to relieve pressure on natural parks and open spaces from inappropriate use. While a majority of Marin residents desire and respect natural areas, many residents would like more developed facilities. Such facilities will lessen unauthorized use of areas adjacent to existing parks and will serve as potential revenue generators.

## C. OPTIONS FOR FUNDING ACQUISITION AND OPERATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Even in Marin County, with its relatively well-developed tax base, municipal austerity programs have had a profound effect on the ability to acquire, develop, maintain and improve public parks and recreation facilities. Implementation of policies for expanding parks and recreation resources despite fiscal constraints will require creativity and ingenuity. The following section identifies both traditional and non-traditional approaches to obtaining and maintaining parkland and recreation resources.

### 1. Public Acquisition of Parklands

#### a. In-Fee Purchase

Traditionally, park and recreation agencies relied primarily on purchase of land for public parks in fee. The funding source was most often a budget allocation from the general fund, supplemented by bond issues for large and important purchases. City and County budgets now have little room for parks, even if a convincing case were made for a major expansion program. Although Marin County residents have shown a willingness to support bond issues for open space acquisition, it should not be assumed that bond money will be available for park purposes, or at least for all the expanded park acquisition, development and operations that appear to be needed.

The fact that very little new park land has been added to the 1977 inventory reflects the Proposition 13 curtailment of jurisdictions' ability to fund improvements, programs and maintenance from normal revenue sources. The effects of Proposition 13 only began to be felt after 1978. Moreover, between 1978 and 1991, local governments have also been affected by two recessions and curtailment of some outside funding sources. Voters have also been unwilling to approve bond issues for acquisition or construction of new recreation facilities.

However, funds for purchase may be available from other sources. A thorough exploration of available approaches should be undertaken regularly. Funding sources include: Community Development Block grant funds (for projects which serve low- and moderate-income areas), State Bond funds, private grants, and the State Roberti-Z'Berg

Urban Grant Program. Substantial grants are likely to be available only from the State funds. However, competition among jurisdictions and among projects is intense. Whenever possible, the County and other recreation agencies should seek ways to combine funding and acquisition sources, supplementing dedications, donations and easements with publicly or grant-funded acquisitions.

b. Negotiated Purchase

The major advantage of purchase, as opposed to condemnation, is that it is possible to reduce the initial cost through installment purchases or options to purchase. Under each of these alternatives, the price of acquisition is established but payment may be deferred, at least in part, until revenues from user fees or other sources are generated. The price paid to purchase land on an installment contract or deed of trust is normally higher than that paid in cash.

Purchase can be funded by bond issue, County funds, State or Federal program assistance, or private (foundation) sources. Proposition 13 also limits the local jurisdictions' ability to provide maintenance and operational funds, even if a bond issue is passed. These maintenance and operations funds must be provided from the existing 1% limit on assessed value.

c. Gifts

Gifts of land for open space or park purposes can sometimes be obtained by offering tax incentives to donors. In cases where the donor wishes to remain living on the land, life estates can be developed. Although gifts are not expected to comprise a large source of parkland acquisition, this potential source could be stimulated by publicizing the tax advantages to major owners with an interest in open space, parks and recreation.

d. Eminent Domain

The use of eminent domain to acquire land for most open space uses is well established. The power to condemn land for the purpose of creating parks is less common and is politically undesirable. Ordinarily, eminent domain is used to acquire property only a few years before the desired use is to be developed. Eminent domain cannot be used to acquire land on an installment basis.

e. Use of the Development Process

As indicated above in the discussion of the Quimby Act, cities and counties are permitted to require that private developers dedicate land and/or pay in lieu fees for the purpose of park development. Standards set in each subdivision ordinance must show that existing parkland provision is below three acres per thousand or, in exceptional communities, five acres per thousand. Dedications or fees must serve the proposed development but parts may also be used by other adjacent residential areas.

Where parkland is in particularly short supply, cities may consider offering density bonuses or other incentives in return for excess dedications or fees. As with other uses of bonuses and incentives, available infrastructure and environmental conditions must be capable of supporting the additional units.

In some instances, it may be preferable to acquire park land rather than open space when lands in a subdivision are offered for dedication by developers. Under these circumstances, County Community Development Agency and Open Space District planners should review the lands proposed for dedication to determine if they are suitable for park purposes.

Cities should examine their subdivision ordinances to ensure that they provide sufficient flexibility with regard to the in-lieu fee option. It is often desirable to require payment of fees, in order to avoid acquiring land which is poorly located or otherwise unsuitable for park use. The fees can be used for purchase of a more suitable and easily developable site in the general vicinity.

Where a nexus can be found, developers may also be required to provide recreation easements as a condition of approval of a proposed project. Such easements should include all coastal access permits identified in the Local Coastal Program, segments of Countywide Trails and bikeways in accordance with the approved Trails Element of the Countywide Plan, and local access to the park associated with the development.

## 2. Less than Fee Acquisition of Parkland

### a. Zoning

In some cases, passive, visual open space may be desirable for improving the setting of a park or protecting a unique or otherwise valued resource for which access is not required. In such cases, local agencies may be able to avoid acquisition costs through the use of zoning.

However, while zoning can insure orderly, attractive, environmentally-sensitive development, it cannot prevent development. More permanent protection can be achieved through specific plans that require clustered development and preservation of a portion or portions of the site of a project in open space and/or public access easements.

### b. Agreements

As an alternative to zoning, agreements, worked out to the mutual satisfaction of both parties, may offer the simplest and most cost-effective method of meeting preservation objectives.

An example of such an agreement is a recreational easement for playing fields and tennis courts at the Hidden Valley School in Sleepy Hollow, acquired by the Marin County from the Ross Valley School District. The agreement stipulates that the area subject to the easement will be used in perpetuity for recreation except during school hours. The remainder of the property may be leased or sold by the school district.

c. Use and/or Acquisition of School Sites and Facilities

This key approach invokes the Naylor Act to augment the local inventory of park facilities by preserving surplus school sites for recreational use. See Section III.A.2.b for additional discussion.

d. Special Districts

The types of special districts that provide parks and recreation services are explained below:

**CSA:** A Community Service Area (CSA) is formed and governed by the County Board of Supervisors in a specific geographic area for a specific purpose or purposes. There are a number of CSAs throughout the County that were formed for the purpose of acquiring open space. A similar body could be used for the purpose of acquiring park land.

**CSD:** A Community Service District (CSD) is a separate government agency under State law that has its own elected governing board and serves multiple purposes. Marinwood CSD is an example of a comprehensive CSD which provides recreation, fire protection and police services, and open space.

**LLD:** A Landscape and Lighting District (LLD) is formed and governed by the County Board of Supervisors under the State's Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972. The act permits the installation, maintenance, and servicing of landscaping and lighting through annual special assessments on real property benefiting from the improvement. The amount assessed is based not on a property valuation but on the estimated benefits to each parcel (Sturgiss, Ness, Brunsell & Sperry, "Special Assessments Under the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972, State of California," Emeryville, CA: 1989).

Several of the special districts in unincorporated Marin County provide parks and recreation services and one, the Strawberry Recreation and Parks District, was established exclusively for this purpose. Such districts are now difficult to establish due to the effect of fiscal and economic constraints on voter preferences. However, the County could play an important indirect role in augmenting recreation opportunities by helping the proponents of new districts plan and promote their establishment.

### 3. Development, Maintenance and Program Funding

Funding limitations affect the ability of the County and other service agencies to acquire additional park space. Limited funding also restricts the ability of these agencies to develop new facilities and programs within existing parks and to operate and maintain existing facilities. Thus, apparent opportunities for no-cost or low-cost acquisition, such as excess school properties, become significant issues because of the additional burden they may represent in terms of development, operation and maintenance.

#### a. User Fees

User fees are a means of financing improvements, maintenance and programs. However, some county residents cannot afford private recreation or public facilities and programs for which user fees are charged. Some communities appear to have found a greater acceptance of charges for the use of recreation facilities and participation in recreation programs. Belvedere reports that its programs are 100% funded by fees; however, Belvedere is a relatively high income city.

Some communities may consider offering reduced rates for large families, packages of several programs, or use of several facilities for a period of time. Cities and special districts should also maintain regular cooperative arrangements, fee structures, and prepare joint information brochures to ensure the maximum service population for each facility and program. Many agencies are finding that their ability to finance needed programs is restricted by too small a market, which results from jurisdictional boundaries and sometimes overlapping services.

#### b. Public/Private Partnerships

In order to finance capital-intensive facilities, the County should consider partnerships with the private sector. When private funds are used to develop a major facility on County-leased land, the County receives minimum annual rent and a percentage of the gross. This financial arrangement could be used for facilities such as golf courses and marinas, which could also include restaurants and other revenue-producing facilities. Revenues generated from these facilities should be used to finance other park capital improvements and cover a substantial part of the maintenance and operation cost of the County park system. Public/private partnerships offer an innovative approach to funding major projects under the revenue constraints of Proposition 4. Projects financed in the above mentioned manner are subject to possessory interest tax, which exempts the project from the Proposition 4 limits on excess revenue uses.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

**Objective PR-1. Parks and Recreation System.** To plan and establish a park and recreation system which meets the various needs of County residents.

##### Policy PR-1.1

**Planning of Facilities.** The County will plan its park and recreation facilities as a part of a comprehensive system of local, district, regional, State, and National parks and open space providing for active recreation, passive enjoyment and the protection of natural resources.

##### Program PR-1.1a

**Ascertaining Park Needs.** The County will continue to monitor use of all existing County parks and periodically conduct needs assessments on park needs. The County will regularly contact other park and recreation departments and agencies to determine their needs and park development status.

##### Program PR-1.1b

**Acquisition Plan.** For each proposed parkland site, the County will prepare an acquisition plan to fulfill the needs in each needs assessment. The acquisition plan will include the following: property boundary determination, evaluation of geographical area served, study of alternative sites in the area, environmental review and a financing plan.

##### Program PR-1.1c

**Resource Analysis.** After a parkland site has been acquired, and prior to the development of a master plan and capital improvement plan, the County will complete a resource analysis. This resource analysis will identify features of the parkland which have significant resource value and will provide a plan for future vegetation and wildlife management. When the parkland includes an aquatic element, the County will prepare a water management plan.

##### Program PR-1.1d

**Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.** The County will prepare a complete master plan and capital improvement plan for all acquired parkland sites. The master plan will include a site development plan showing proposed development. The capital improvement plan will include: a proposed time frame for development and estimated cost for each phase of the development, estimated cost of maintenance and operation, estimated potential for generating revenue from the site, and potential sources of funds for park development.

**Objective PR-2. Operations and Management.** To increase the supply of needed parklands and capital facilities and to replace closed facilities for which there an identified need.

**Policy PR-2.1**

**Increasing Inventory of Park Land.** The County will continue its efforts to acquire additional acreage to expand existing Countywide parks. The County will add new Countywide parks in locations where there are identified needs, projected population growth or shifts, or land with an abundance of natural resources - such as shoreline and beachfront.

**Policy PR-2.2**

**Coordination With Other Providers.** The County will continue its efforts to provide facilities that will supplement and augment facilities offered by other park and recreation jurisdictions. The County will not develop facilities that are already offered by other park and recreation providers and which would compete for the same user group.

**Policy PR-2.3**

**Replacing Closed Facilities.** The County will attempt to replace countywide park and recreation facilities that are closed or that become unavailable for other reasons, if the need for these facilities still exists.

**Policy PR-2.4**

**Coordination of Replacement Efforts.** The County will coordinate efforts to replace closed popular countywide recreational facilities that are operated by other local jurisdictions or by the private sector.

**Policy PR-2.5**

**Capital Facilities.** The County will plan for park and recreation capital facilities and pursue a variety of available funding sources.

**Program PR-2.5a**

**Capital Improvement Plan Update.** The County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services Department will update its capital improvement plan each year to keep the plan five years in advance of the current year. The plan will include a brief description of each project, its estimated cost, and how it will be funded.

**Program PR-2.5b**

**User Fees.** The County will charge fees for use of park and recreation facilities when appropriate. Such fees and charges will be reviewed periodically and revised based on County resources, and public acceptance and need. The County will hold public hearings on user charges as required by State law when establishment of fees and fee increases is being considered by the Board of Supervisors.

Program PR-2.5c **Funding Sources.** The County will continue to pursue all available public and private funding sources to assist in the financing of park and recreation projects and programs.

**Objective PR-3. Diverse Programs and Inter-jurisdictional Coordination.** To encourage the provision of recreation programs that meet the needs of diverse populations and are coordinated with programs provided by cities and special districts.

**Policy PR-3.1** **Restriction on County services in Cities or Special Districts.** The County will not offer organized recreation programs in areas that are served by cities, towns, or special districts.

**Policy PR-3.2** **Assistance to Unincorporated Communities.** The County will assist unincorporated communities with the provision of recreation programs in these communities.

**Policy PR-3.3** **Activities Provided in County Facilities.** The County will provide recreation activities which complement but do not duplicate activities provided in Federal and State parks.

Program PR-3.3a **Overnight Camping in County Parks.** The County may consider including areas designated for overnight camping in future park master plans. Overnight camping by groups may be allowed in County parks with the approval of the Director of the Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services. Overnight camping by individuals is not allowed in County parks.

Program PR-3.3b **Picnic Facilities.** The County will provide group picnic areas in most County parks and will charge fees for the use of these facilities.

**Policy PR-3.4** **Assistance With Special Needs.** The County will provide assistance with special programs for special populations whenever possible. The County will try to insure that all parks are designed to meet the needs and financial means of the handicapped and senior populations. The County will review special programs annually and make revisions as appropriate.

**Policy PR-3.5** **County as Resource and Facilitator.** The County will serve as a resource and facilitator for all agencies providing park and recreation facilities and services in the County.

Program PR-3.5a **Assistance to Local Agencies.** The County Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services will continue to provide practical

and financial advice to local agencies on request. Assistance may include the following: providing information and advice on seeking funding, helping with lobbying for funds, providing advice on fees and charges, undertaking efforts to establish special districts, and negotiating with school districts, developers or other potential recreation providers.

**Program PR-3.5b**

Service to Cities. The County will continue to provide assistance in developing policies and standards in support of efforts by cities to improve and expand the local park and recreation system.

**Program PR-3.5c**

Service to Unincorporated Communities. When necessary the County will work with unincorporated communities and special districts to provide park or recreation services with the understanding that ongoing services must be funded at the local level.

**Program PR-3.5d**

Resource Staff. The County will act as resource staff to special districts or unincorporated areas needing assistance.

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